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# A Fragment of the *Prasannapadā* in the Bodleian Library

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## Abstract

This short paper identifies and diplomatically edits a fragment hitherto unidentified, Bodleian Library Oxford Ms. Sansk. a. 11 (R), a few lines from chapter 24 of Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā*. After briefly discussing the extraneous (tantric) material in this bundle, I collate the text with the two available editions and argue that the folio fragment might very likely be a part of the Oxford Manuscript (the so-called Ms. P).

## Keywords

Madhyamaka, Candrakīrti, *Prasannapadā*, Bodleian Library, manuscript studies.

This very short paper is, as so many things in our field, the result of serendipity and generosity. In early November of 2018, I became involved in an e-mail exchange discussing Prof. Seishi Karashima and Dr. Vincent Tournier's visit to the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Naturally, they were looking for witnesses of earlier Buddhist literature, so I suggested that they might wish to look at what I thought to be an “Abhidharmic” fragment hiding in a less than obvious place, shelf no. Ms. Sansk. a. 11 (R), described in the catalogue as “Tantric Mantras”.<sup>1</sup>

I became interested in this small bundle after having read Tanaka 1995, in which he describes some of its contents as possibly hailing from the middle period of tantric Buddhism and therefore of potentially great importance. Dr. Tanaka promised a study of this text, but as far as I know this has not yet materialised. After some research of my own, I came to the conclusion that this fragment is part of an obscure corpus of texts centred on the cult of the goddess Praçaṇḍavegavatī (also called Svedāmbujā or Vidyujjvālākārāṇī). The chief scripture, which in actual fact is a collection of three texts, can be found in a long manuscript finished on July 10th, 1024 CE. This is National Archives Kathmandu 3-359 vi. *bauddhatantra* 62, archived by the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project, reel no. A 47/16. I am aware of at least two more items from the literature of this cult.<sup>2</sup>

After having read the folios with the tantric material, I found that this small collection contained another fragment, which was completely unrelated to tantric literature. The

<sup>1</sup> Winternitz & Keith 1905, item 1456, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup> In 2015 I presented a paper dealing with this cult at the Tantric Communities in Context conference in Vienna. I wish to thank the organisers for this opportunity. I shall present my findings related to this corpus elsewhere.

catalogue and Dr. Tanaka barely acknowledge its presence and I could not identify it either back in 2009. I almost completely forgot about it until the aforementioned exchange of letters, in which I also forwarded my transcript. Dr. Tournier promptly identified it as a fragment of the *Prasannapadā* and Prof. Karashima suggested that I should publish this find. While I am very grateful to both for their kindness, I do so with some reluctance, primarily because this text is beyond the scope of my primary interests and expertise. I nevertheless hope that future editors of this section of the *Prasannapadā* might find the fragment useful. I am also very grateful to Dr. Camillo Formigatti who took photographs of the fragment at my request. This allowed me to check my initial transcript and saved me from a few blunders.

There is a good chance that this fragment is part of Bodleian Library Ms. Sansk. a. 9 (R),<sup>3</sup> in other words what is referred to as ms. P in the most recent edition of the first chapter of the *Prasannapadā*.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, at the time of writing this paper I could not visit the Bodleian Library to confirm this possibility. However, many of the features in MacDonald's description are shared by our fragment, e.g. the tripartite format of the folio and the number of lines. One such feature might prove conclusive, namely the style in which corrections are applied,<sup>5</sup> cf. n. 20 & n. 26 here. In a subsequent e-mail exchange, Dr. MacDonald very kindly confirmed that there is indeed a major lacuna in ms. P at this point, namely folios 95 and 96. Having consulted microfilm images of folios 94 *verso* and 97 *recto*, we agreed that the scribal hand of our fragment does not conclusively match with that of ms. P, however, this could be due to fact that *akṣaras* on a colour image and a black and white microfilm image might seem slightly different to the human eye. Moreover, once the *lacuna* at the beginning of the fragment has been accounted for, it seems that our fragment could indeed be a piece of folio 95 of ms. P. Preferring to err on the side of caution, I give the folio number as X. Each + sign stands for a lost or illegible *akṣara*.

The single-folio fragment is badly mutilated; only a little more than the third column is preserved. In La Vallée Poussin's edition (henceforth LVP), the corresponding passage is on p. 484, l. 7 up to p. 489, l. 7. I have also collated the fragment with the constituted text in Kishine 2001 (henceforth K), disregarding minor issues such as typographical/typesetting errors; the relevant passage is on p. 1762 (2), l. 15 up to p. 1764 (4), l. 26. I wish to thank Dr. MacDonald for providing me with a scan of this article. The string space (which is left empty in all lines) is marked here with a circle. The editions allow me to estimate that the *lacuna* at the beginning of the lines consists of approximately 80 *akṣaras*. The incorporated *kārikā* is marked in bold. Restored readings are placed in brackets. The asterisk marks a *virāma*.

[*incipit*]

[X *recto*, l. 1] [*deest*] sthitaḥ sa śro<sup>○</sup>taāpanna<sup>6</sup> ity ucyate | ta ete 'ṣṭāśītir anuśayāḥ satyānām

<sup>3</sup>. Winternitz & Keith 1905, item 1440, p. 254.

<sup>4</sup>. MacDonald 2015, see pp. 35–50.

<sup>5</sup>. *Op. cit.* p. 40.

<sup>6</sup>. The ligature *-nna* is the result of a correction. The *ante correctionem* reading cannot be made out, but contained an *-ū*. K prints *srotāpanna* erroneously.

darśanamātreṇa bhāvanām anapekṣaiva<sup>7</sup> prahī-

[X recto, l. 2] [deest] pratighavarjji○tās trayah | ārūpyāvacarās ca traya eta eveti daśa bhavanti | ete ca yathoktena nyāyena bhūmau bhūmau<sup>8</sup> navadhā nava-<sup>9</sup>

[X recto, l. 3] [deest]kleśaprakāro ○ mṛdumṛdubhyām ānantarya<sup>10</sup>vimuktimārgābhyām prahīyate | yāvan mṛdumṛdukleśaprakāro 'dhimātrādhimā-

[X recto, l. 4] [deest]pratipakṣa<sup>11</sup>○vimuktimārgākhyajñānād arvāg<sup>12</sup>jñānakṣaṇāvasthita āryah<sup>13</sup> sakṛdāgāmiphalaḥpratipannaka ity ucyate

[X recto, l. 5] [deest]ārgakṣaṇā○d arvāg<sup>14</sup>jñānakṣaṇeṣu varttamāna āryo 'nāgāmiphalaḥpratipannaka ity ucyate | anāga<sup>15</sup>.e + .(okam) -

[X recto, l. 6] [deest]vamaḥkleśa○prakāraprahāṇe<sup>16</sup> vimuktimārggkṣaṇād arvāk\*kṣaṇeṣu<sup>17</sup> varttamāna āryo 'rhatphalaḥpratipa + + + + + -

[X recto, l. 7] [deest]

[X verso, l. 1] [deest]

[X verso, l. 2] [deest]vaty abhedya○tvād avetyaprasāda<sup>18</sup>lābhena saṃghaḥ sa na syāt\* | na cet santi te 'ṣṭ(au p)uruṣ(a)pu + + + + + + + + + + -

[X verso, l. 3] [deest] eṣa ā○ryasatyānām abhāve sati nāstīti | **abhāvāc cāryasatyānām saddharmo pi na vidyate | sa + + cāsa-**<sup>19</sup>

[X verso, l. 4] [deest]saṃbhāras ta○ddānamānasaraṇagamanādibhiś copacīyamāna<sup>20</sup>puṇya-saṃbhāraḥ kramād buddho bhavet\* | atha vā asatī<sup>21</sup> saṃ-

[X verso, l. 5] [deest]ty eva bhagavā○n<sup>22</sup> bhavati | saṃghe cāsati niyataṃ nāsti bhagavān\* buddhaḥ | atha vā<sup>23</sup> bhagavān apy aśaikṣe ntarbhāvāt<sup>24</sup> saṃghānta-

7. Read with LVP & K: *anapekṣyaiva*.

8. The *akṣaras* -na *bhūmau bhūmau* are the result of a correction, very likely that of a haplography, *i.e.* a single *bhūmau*.

9. LVP & K have *navadhā* only once. It is possible that this is the result of a haplography, and that thus here we have a superior reading (assuming that the next *akṣara* was -*dhā*).

10. K has *ānantarya*<sup>o</sup>, probably a typographical error.

11. The scribe started to write a *va*, but realised that he is running into the string space, hence he cancelled it.

12. LVP (followed by K, except interpreting *arvāg* not in compound) wished to read °*ākhyajñāna[kṣaṇā]*d *arvāg*<sup>o</sup>, but this witness disagrees.

13. LVP has *ārya[h]*; our witness confirms the correction. So does the Rome witness, see de Jong 1978, p. 242.

14. K prints °*vimuktimārgajñānakṣaṇād arvāg*.

15. After this a *mātrā* was probably rubbed out.

16. LVP & K have °*prahāṇa*<sup>o</sup> for °*prahāṇe*.

17. LVP & K (except *arvāg* not in compound) have *arvāgjñānakṣaṇeṣu* for *arvākkṣaṇeṣu*.

18. The *akṣara* -*sā*- is the result of a correction. The *ante correctionem* reading has been rubbed out. K prints *avetya pratisāda*<sup>o</sup>.

19. LVP & K have *dharme cāsati*. The *akṣaras* *cāsa*- (as well as the final *saṃ* in the next line) are not visible on the current photographs, because in the meantime a small part of the palm leaf has broken off and folded back on itself. I supply these from my previous transcript.

20. The *akṣara* -*ya*- is the result of a correction. The *ante correctionem* reading has been rubbed out. The initial correction in the lower margin (-*ya*-4) is faint but still visible. The number refers to the line number when counted from the lower margin.

21. The *akṣaras* *asatī* are the result of a correction. The *ante correctionem* reading (possibly with *sandhi* not in *pausa*) has been rubbed out.

22. The *ā* in *bhagavān*, just before the string space, is spelt with a *dhvaja*; perhaps a correction.

23. LVP & K read only *atha*. Our fragment seems to have a slightly superior reading.

24. LVP & K read *aśaikṣāntarbhāvāt*. It is not entirely out of the question that the scribe meant the mark looking like an -*e* as a *dhvaja*. The Rome witness (90 verso, l. 12) agrees with our fragment, but this is not recorded in de Jong 1978. I am grateful to Prof. Jundo Nagashima for this information.

[X verso, l. 6] [deest]s tu<sup>25</sup> mahāva○stūpadiṣṭabhūmivyavasthayā<sup>26</sup> prathamabhūmisthitam  
 bodhisattvam utpannadarśanamārgam vyācakṣyāṇāḥ<sup>27</sup> samghā-  
 [X verso, l. 7] [deest]n\* buddhadharmasam○ghākhyāni trīṇy api durllabhatvāt\* kadācid  
 evotpattitaḥ | alpa<sup>28</sup>puṇyānāṃ ca tadaprāpter<sup>29</sup> mahā-

[explicit]

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<sup>25</sup> LVP reads (after correction) *madhyoddesikās ca*. K follows this solution. The adversative particle here is perhaps clearer. (For a discussion of this passage, see Tournier 2017, pp. 260 ff.) However, our initial surviving *akṣara* looks more like a *mtu* rather than a *stu*, but that reading is quite impossible.

<sup>26</sup> The *akṣaras -bhūmivya-* are the result of a correction. The *ante correctionem* reading has been rubbed out. The initial correction in the lower margin (*-mi-* 2) is faint but still visible. The number refers to the line number when counted from the lower margin.

<sup>27</sup> The second *-ā-* is the result of a correction (perhaps in a second hand). Read with LVP & K: *vyācakṣyāṇāḥ*.

<sup>28</sup> LVP & K read °*otpattito* 'lpa°.

<sup>29</sup> K prints *tadaprapter*, probably a typographical error.

Fig. 2. *verso*

